

The Public Defender—A New Bulwark Continued from page 3

co-operation between the public defender and the prosecutor.

The introduction of the public defender in Los Angeles has practically eliminated the shyster lawyer who made his devious living by preying upon the ignorant and unfortunate. To foreigners who have an imperfect knowledge of our language and customs the office has been an especial boon. Instead of being forced to rely upon crooked interpreters, often in league with an attorney to defraud him, he is given the services of a reliable interpreter hired by the public defender. Many a man has been railroaded into the penitentiary because of inability to tell the facts in intelligible English and not having money to hire a competent interpreter.

Another thing that the public defender's office has accomplished and which alone should justify its establishment is the number of youths saved from the penitentiary and started upon the right road. Here is one incident of many hundreds.

A youth was arrested at San Pedro, the harbor town of Los Angeles, for stealing a boiled ham and a sweater. He refused the services of an attorney and pleaded guilty. The judge was not satisfied. He asked the public defender to have a talk with the young man before he was sentenced. At first he refused to tell Aggeler about his parents or home. But Aggeler persisted. Finally he gave the name of his father in St. Louis but pleaded with Aggeler not to let his mother know of his predicament. Aggeler wrote East and received telegrams in return stating that his father had been searching for the boy for three years. He had left home when 16 and had drifted from one city to another, obtaining odd jobs. He had gone to San Pedro intending to ship on a boat but as he had to wait several days before a ship came in he bunked with a beach comber. When their money ran out the old man persuaded him to steal the boiled ham from a butcher shop where he also picked up an old sweater.

It was his first offense and justified in a measure by hunger. Public Defender Aggeler presented the case to the court who released the youth on probation. His father sent him a ticket to come home, as well as money to pay for the ham. He met the boy at the depot, bought him a new suit of clothes and to this day the boy's mother does not know of her son's narrow escape from being a convict. The boy is now married and doing very well.

This is only one of many such incidents related by

Mr. Aggeler. Surely it pays any community to make useful citizens of such boys, who are not criminals at heart but often the victims of circumstance.

But it is not in criminal cases alone that the public defender's office has justified its existence. The public defender has recovered as much as \$25,000 in a single year in small claims for working men. The civil department of the office is in many ways as important to the cause of justice as the criminal one.

In the report for 1919-1920 the public defender is reported to have handled 6,837 applications.

Advice was given in 4,582 cases and 1,112 cases were turned over to other attorneys as the applicants were financially able to prosecute the suits themselves.

In both criminal and civil cases the applicant is required to swear to an affidavit setting forth that he is financially unable to fight the case. The public defender then investigates if he suspects that he is being imposed upon. Such cases are rare, however, as most of the applicants are sincere in their desire to tell the truth.

The claims accepted for adjustment were divided in 1919-1920 as follows: Labor claims, 537; detention of personal property, 160; injury to personal property, 73; illegal attachments and garnishments, 55; miscellaneous cases, 296.

Suits filed and won numbered 39, suits filed and lost, two and cases pending, four.

The money paid into the office without suit amounted to \$3,870.63; money and chattels recovered without suit out of the office amounted to \$7,902.96. These may not seem to be very imposing totals until it is remembered that all these sums ranged under \$100 each and represented a small fortune to the poor litigants.

The labor claims are mainly those of men who are discharged through some disagreements with their employers. The employer may owe them a matter of \$5 or \$10 and refuse to pay. Under the law as followed in most states, the laborer has no recourse. It would cost him more to collect than the amount due him. In Los Angeles it costs him nothing. He states his case to the public defender or one of his deputies. A letter is sent to his employer asking him to come to the office and explain why he didn't pay his employee. In most cases the employer does not show up. He sends a check. If he feels, however, that he was justified in withholding the money in dispute he explains his side of the case and the public defender acts as arbiter.

It is practically impossible for an employer in Los Angeles County to evade payment of a paid claim, a matter how small it may be, since the establishment of the public defender's office.

The arbitrary seizure of a poor man or woman's personal belongings for non-payment of board or rent has also become almost an extinct habit in Los Angeles because landlords know that they will have the public defender's office to reckon with if they exceed their legal rights.

Servants unjustly deprived of their wages for alleged breakage are protected by the public defender and numerous society matrons have been summoned to explain why a certain sum was deducted from Tillie's wages. When they find that the girl has found a defender they usually settle the amount in dispute rather than stand suit and the consequent notoriety. No matter how small one may be, he or she dislikes to have the fact advertised.

Illegal garnishments, instituted by loan sharks and others of their ilk, and illegal attachments, much more numerous than one would imagine, come under the scrutiny of the public defender's office. Many an unfortunate, whose wages have been garnished to pay the voracious interest of a loan shark and whose furniture has been taken from his home to satisfy some rapacious creditor, has been rescued by the public defender.

A glance along the long corridor that faces the public defender's offices and those of his deputies gives an insight into the character of the business transacted within. Two chairs are occupied by cripples, men at the prime of life who evidently have a hard time keeping the wolf from the door. In the next chair sits a buxom colored woman; then an angular little woman with the mincing manner of an old maid. Next to her is a well-dressed woman past middle age who looks like a housekeeper or mayhap a chambermaid. Sitting beyond her is a flashily-dressed woman of thirty. A little old lady with the roughened hands of a scrub woman is next and then two laborers, a white man and a Mexican.

How long would the exponents of Bolshevism continue to obtain converts in the cities of this land if the laboring class knew that the state was as ready to defend them as it was to prosecute? The inequality of the law is one of the agitator's strongest talking points. Let his auditors realize that poverty would not defraud them of their rights in the courts and half his thunder would be stolen.

"Cutting Up Old Circus Money"

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tacular fashion. I always wound things up that way: it was the circus coming out of me, I guess.

"One night shortly after that, we were riding to Waco. We were within three or four miles of the town before daylight when we thought we would take a nap. We carried horsehair lariats and little stakes that we stuck in the ground to picket our ponies while we slept. We also carried Mexican blankets that we put under the saddles to ease our ponies' backs. That gave us a blanket apiece if we wanted them when it rained.

"This night I took the blanket off my pony, folded it up nicely, and laid it on the grass; put my pony out with the lariat, and lay down to sleep. About sun-up I woke up when the rest of the boys did, picked up my blanket, and started to fold it, when I looked down at my feet. There lay two of the biggest bull snakes I ever saw. I had been lying on them all night, and I didn't know whether they crawled there while I was asleep, or whether I laid the blanket down on them before I went to sleep.

"When I saw the snakes I was paralyzed. For a minute I stood still, and then I commenced to yell and jump around like I was crazy. There was nothing there to kill the snakes with, and they crawled away. That settled the pony riding for good. And to this day, as old as I am, I shiver every time I think of those snakes, and as long as I ran the show I never did go close to any of the snake charmers; nor did I ever look at any of the thousands of snakes that I've owned.

"And a curious thing, too, about being scared by snakes, I got another terrible snake scare in Texas years after that time. The whole show got it, too. I had a snake man by the name of Millwood with the show who had been with me for years. I hired him at Cairo, Illinois. He had a cage built like a room, and he claimed to have one thousand reptiles in it, of every variety on the American continent. Well, he had this cage on the street in Cairo one year when we showed there, and it was such an attraction that I heard about it, and sent my brother Gil down to look it over. When he came back and reported to me what it was, I hired the man. He conducted

what we call the 'uptown show,' an attraction that catches the crowds before parade on the street.

"Millwood would sit among the snakes, fondling them, and appeared to be infatuated with them. There was nothing he loved so well as a snake, and he never was happy without a bunch of them about him. He carried snakes in every pocket, and they always were of the deadly kind. And he never took the bother to remove their poison bags. But I never let him come near me; I told him I'd kill him if he didn't keep as far away from me as he could when he saw me coming.

"One season, when we were returning from San Francisco to Florida, whenever the circus trains stopped in Texas for water, or to pass other trains, everybody jumped off and commenced to hunt snake holes.

"Hey, Millwood, here's another snake hole," whoever found one would yell.

"Then Millwood would come running, and shove

his hand down into the hole and pull out the snake. By that time, somebody else would find a snake hole, and Millwood pulled out snakes until the train started. He put the snakes in a carpet bag.

"One Sunday afternoon he had the bag filled with snakes when the train pulled out. When he got on the sleeper he hung the bag on a hook. The berths were stationary, and the boys were lying in them, smoking and talking and singing, when some fellow happened to look up. The carpet bag was open, and snakes were falling out of it as fast as they could.

"Well, my private car was next to this car, and I heard the yelling. I thought something awful had happened, and ran to the door. Just as I got there the car door was pouring out men like they were rats scampering from a burning building. They climbed on the roof, and some of them jumped off while the train was running twenty miles an hour.

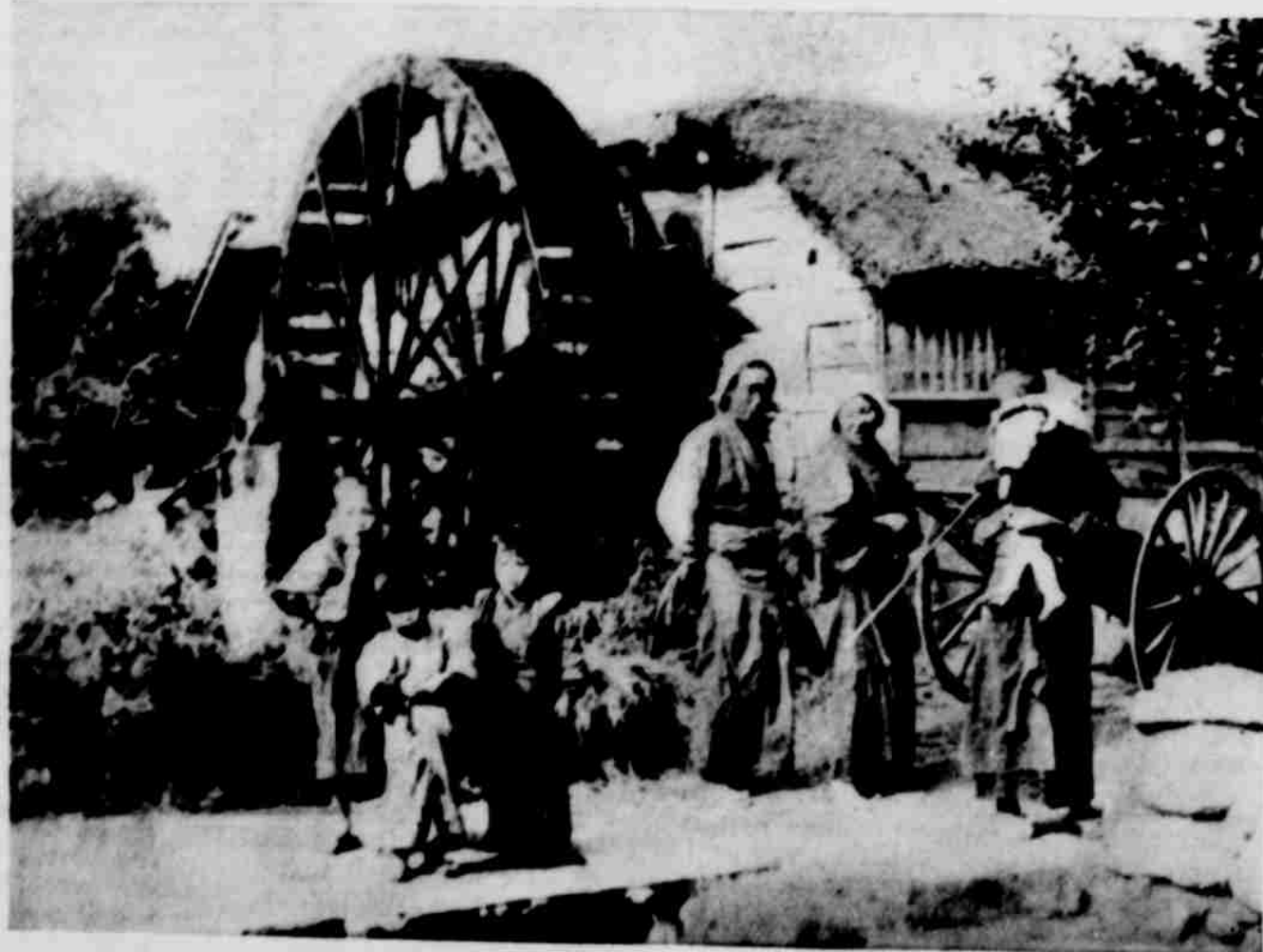
"We finally got the train stopped, and sent Millwood into the car to get his snakes. He put them in his carpet bag, but he couldn't tell whether he had all of them, because he hadn't counted them. The only way we got the thing settled was to sidetrack the car; tear everything out of it, and thoroughly search it. And I had the same thing done to my car, but they found no snakes in it. But for weeks I never entered that car, and I never went to bed, but what I cringed all over, thinking of the snakes. Millwood had turned loose by his carelessness, and of the morning I saw the two bull snakes on the prairie just outside of Waco.

"Millwood, however, died a horrible death a few years after that time in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Across the street from his uptown show a saloon keeper had in a box the biggest rattlesnake that had been captured in that vicinity. Millwood went in to see it, ran his hand down into the box, and pulled the snake out. He finally bought it for a dollar.

"When he got a little leisure time he brought the snake out, and began caressing it; rubbing his hand over its head, and holding it to his bosom. Then he bent over to kiss the snake, and it bit him.

"The liquor he usually drank to counteract the poison did not avail, and he died in the most intense agony."

A 300-Year-Old Flour Mill in Japan



The miller and his family are shown in the foreground while in the background is to be noted the picturesque old water wheel that turns the machinery which for three centuries has ground the flour for neighboring farmers.

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